Research Governance Standard Operating Procedure

Guidance for obtaining consent for research with child participants in schools

SOP Reference:	**SOP/RGO/02**
Version Number:	**01**
Date:	**0109/2018**
Effective Date:	**11/10/2018**
Review Date:	**11/10/2021**
Owner	**University Research Governance Committee (rgoffice@sussex.ac.uk)**

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Version	Effective Date	Reason for Change
0.1	24/10/2014	N/A
0.2	01/10/2018	Reviewed and updated to reflect changes to data legislation and enhancements for increased clarity

1. Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance to researchers in relation to:

(1) what procedures should be used to obtain consent for primary data collection from children and young people in schools, and
(2) when it is appropriate and acceptable for researchers to use “opt out” parent/carer permission (sometimes called parent/carer consent) procedures for primary data collection from children and young people in schools.

Having this guidance in place standardises the principles and expectations University Research Ethics Committees apply when reviewing proposals involving primary data collection from children and young people in schools.

1.1 Scope

Ethical research practice is situated in context, and therefore the most ethically appropriate course of action in any given study will depend on factors including the age of participants,

Data collection in schools and the Data Protection Act (2018) (General Data Protection Regulation)

As a University researcher, all members of staff and students undertaking research activity should understand the limits and implications of current data legislation.

The Data Protection Act states that personal data must:

- be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
- be collected only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and not be further processed in any manner incompatible with those;
- be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed;
- be accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date;
- not be kept as identifiable data for longer than necessary for the purposes concerned; and
- be processed securely.

Legal bases for conducting research using personal data:

In most circumstances the legal basis for using personal data for university research will be 'public task'.

By using 'public task' as the legal basis for taking personal data, the University ensures that as a publicly-funded organisation, it is through the exercising of official, public tasks that data is taken from people who have agreed to take part in research, and that the researcher is

2.1 Criteria for requiring ‘opt-in’ parent/carer permission

The URGC has agreed that the default position for research involving primary data collection from participants aged under 16 years in schools should be for **“opt in”** parent/carer permission procedures to be used. However, recognising that this is not appropriate in all circumstances, it was agreed that opt-in parent/carer permission should be expected, unless researchers can **justify** using alternative procedures.

(a) is likely to mean that research involving children (and young people in formal educational settings) is effectively ‘ruled out’ (as “high risk”), contrary to the aims of the ESRC’s Research Ethics Framework (REF).

This does not mean that research involving children (and young people in formal educational settings) is effectively ruled out (as “high risk”), contrary to the aims of the ESRC’s Research Ethics Framework (REF). 002 Tc (en)10.5 (t)5 Iu(l)2.6 ;-2 (ea

procedures for obtaining permission from parents/carers *and* children and young people.

Situations in which “**opt out**” parent/carer permission procedures may be permissible include group testing/data collection on topics included on the standard school curriculum or class observation (such as that undertaken in the course of teachers’ continuing professional development or similar). In such cases, Head Teachers must register the

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(1) provide a rationale for the study,

(2) describe the requirements of schools and children involved in the study, and

(3) explain the arrangements for obtaining child consent, and parent/carer permission (if this is required).

Researchers hoping to use "opt-out" parent/carer permission processes must justify this in their application. They must also prepare the following supporting documents:

an information sheet and permission form for parents/carers (see templates available here: K W W S Z Z Z V X V V H [D F X N V W D I I U H V H D U F K J R Y H U Q D Q F H D S

an information and consent form for children written in age-appropriate language (see template available here K W W S Z Z Z D V F X X N H V [W D I I U H V H D U F H K J R V O \).

a form for the school Head Teacher to complete to indicate her/his approval of the use of "opt-out" parent/carer permission procedures [illegible]

Do you have any questions about what will happen or why? yes / no

Do you want to stay and do the activities I have described? yes / no

[When appropriate, the child should complete the section below]
Name
Date